

Lydbury North CofE (A) Primary School

Lydbury North, Shropshire, SY7 8AU

Inspection dates 13–14 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Attainment has risen since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well in all key stages, and in all subjects, including the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teaching is good. Teachers provide many activities which are practical, motivating and relevant to pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and try their best.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are thoughtful, respectful and have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Their attitudes contribute strongly to their learning
- Pupils feel safe in school. Parents and carers also feel that the school keeps their children safe and secure.
- Leaders have worked relentlessly to secure a unified team of staff and a joint governing body. They have ensured that throughout a period of significant changes, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement remain at the heart of the school's improvement work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching that encourages pupils to work on their own or complete longer pieces of writing. Pupils do not always make rapid progress, especially more able pupils in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils do not have opportunities to respond to teachers' marking in their books.
- Governors do not always use all the information available to know how well the school is performing in relation to all schools nationally.
- The plans for improving the school do not have measurable targets to enable leaders to assess the success of their actions.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited seven lessons taught by three teachers and one teaching assistant. She listened to pupils read and observed an assembly.
- The inspector held discussions with pupils, teachers, the headteacher, representatives of the governing body, and a local authority officer.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including policies about keeping pupils safe. She also examined the work in pupils' books.
- The views of 11 parents were analysed through the Parent View website.
- The inspector also considered the views expressed in five questionnaires returned by school staff.

Inspection team

Mary Hinds, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most primary schools.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. A small number of Nursery and Reception children are taught alongside Year 1 and some Year 2 pupils. Key Stage 2 pupils are taught in the other class.
- There are very few pupils who are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those with parents in the armed forces.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school's most recent results cannot be compared with the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, because there were not enough pupils to make such a comparison meaningful.
- The current headteacher took over the leadership of the school in 2011. In January 2012, the school became part of a 'hard federation' with another small primary school. This means that the headship of the federation is shared between two headteachers. There is a joint governing body for both schools. All staff are contracted to work in both settings. The school business manager oversees both sites. The Key Stage 2 teacher joined the school in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase rates of progress so that more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that pupils are given time to write for sustained periods of time in literacy and in other subjects so that all pupils, especially more able pupils, make even faster progress
 - providing clear guidance for pupils on how to improve their work, with time for them to respond to the teachers' marking
 - giving pupils more opportunities to learn for themselves through planning, investigating and applying their skills in all lessons, and especially in problem-solving situations, so that progress is more rapid, particularly for those who find mathematics easy.
- Ensure that all leaders, including governors, have a clear view of how to drive the school forward by:
 - identifying in improvement planning measurable targets that can be evaluated based on pupils' progress
 - making greater use of national data so that leaders are able to assess how well the school is performing in relation to others.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Attainment on entry varies significantly because of the exceptionally small numbers of children who join the school. It is broadly in line with national expectations. Whatever their starting points, children make good progress in all the areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage because adults provide stimulating activities that capture their imagination and interests. This engages children fully in their learning.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 have risen. In 2012, attainment was above average in reading and writing. It was average in mathematics as a result of fewer pupils achieving the higher levels. This was also the case in Key Stage 1. More able pupils could also do better in Key Stage 1 in their writing. Last year, most pupils made better than expected progress in all three subjects given their different starting points.
- Attainment in reading is the strongest. Many older pupils read avidly for pleasure and to help them learn. Younger pupils have a good knowledge of letters and sounds, because these skills are taught systematically and well.
- Pupils' writing is improving because they have opportunities to write about real-life situations. However, there are still too few opportunities for pupils in all year groups to write at length and in other subjects.
- Pupils are increasingly presented with problems to solve in different subjects. Key Stage 2 pupils enjoyed the challenge of deciding which mathematical operations to use to work out how much it would cost Henry VIII to pay his servants. Nevertheless, pupils' books showed that they are not routinely given the opportunity to plan and extend their investigative and independent skills in problem-solving situations.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because the work set for them is matched closely to their individual ability levels. Teaching assistants have regular and up-to-date training. They contribute positively to the pupils' learning by providing tailored support and guidance. The result of these specific activities to boost their progress is regularly monitored and adjusted to sustained good progress.
- The few pupils who are supported by the pupil premium achieve as well as other groups. These pupils benefit from focused help to make sure that their progress is good. These range from one-to-one support, funding for educational visits, and they can take up free places at the school's before- and after-school activities.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They have good subject knowledge and plan effectively. They have an excellent understanding of pupils' ability levels because they make good use of assessment information. They use this to set challenging tasks for pupils of all abilities. Pupils respond well to such activities; they are keen to do their very best.
- Teachers use probing questions to assess pupils' understanding within lessons and they quickly adapt their teaching if pupils are struggling. They intervene and break the task down into smaller steps. This raises pupils' confidence and inspires them to succeed still further.

- Work is now being set within practical, meaningful and relevant situations. In a Key Stage 1 class, pupils celebrated their friends' birthdays by sharing out party treats. They worked co-operatively and systematically together to ensure that each person had equal amounts. The pupils quickly grasped division facts.
- Opportunities for pupils to work on their own are more limited, especially in writing and in mathematics. Pupils are not always able to work on their own initiative, to plan and investigate their own learning, including what resources they will need to complete the task, or to work at length on a piece of writing.
- Teachers mark work frequently and accurately. Although pupils' misconceptions are identified, marking does not always provide them with clear guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils are not given time to respond to the marking.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed to support individuals or small groups of pupils. This ensures that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those pupils eligible for the pupil premium are not left behind. Most reach at least the levels expected for their age by the time they leave school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their good behaviour contribute to their improved progress. They are punctual, and their attendance is above average.
- Pupils work well with their friends and enjoy helping each other. They confirm that behaviour is good, a view supported by parents and carers who contributed to Parent View.
- Pupils listen carefully to teachers and the other adults, and follow their instructions well. They say that they particularly enjoy lessons where they are able to work practically and do things for themselves. Indeed, when they are given the opportunity, pupils show initiative and work well independently, although these opportunities are limited in some lessons.
- Pupils understand that bullying can take many forms. They are confident that adults will sort out any problems they may have. Incidents of bullying are low. When they occur, they are tackled sensitively and immediately by the school.
- Most pupils are mature enough to behave sensibly even when adults are not around. They willingly take on responsibility and help with a wide range of jobs around the school.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe: they are involved in judging risk and know about how to use the internet safely.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, through assemblies, visits and through the Forest Schools lessons. Their weekly visit to the local woodland enables pupils to learn about the natural environment, developing their self-confidence and ability to work in teams. For example, during the inspection, pupils reflected on the wonder of the golden leaves as they fell silently down from the trees.

The leadership and management are good

- Both headteachers provide strong leadership. Through the federation of the two schools, they have created a forward-looking governing body, and staff who share their drive and ambition. This has resulted in significant improvements since the last inspection, particularly in better rates of progress and improved teaching in this school.
 - Leaders make checks on teaching and the quality of learning, and tackle weaknesses in order to develop teachers' skills. They set targets for teachers to improve their performance that are linked to pupils' achievement. This informs staff development and training.
 - Staff work closely with their colleagues in their partner school, sharing expertise, training and staff development. The quality of teaching continues to improve through increased opportunities for staff to model, coach and mentor each other, using the best role models across both schools.
 - The school's self-evaluation is accurate and identifies areas of relative weakness. However, planned actions to address areas for improvement do not have specific and measurable targets based on pupils' progress. Leaders, including governors, are not always able to evaluate precisely how successful they are in improving achievement and the quality of teaching.
 - The school effectively promotes equality of opportunity for its pupils. Tracking pupils' progress and checks on the accuracy of assessments have been strengthened from the joint working between the schools. Identified gaps in attainment such as in writing improved achievement for pupils in Year 6 in 2012.
 - The activities planned provide a wide range of relevant experiences for pupils. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write for long periods of time in English and other subjects. Pupils are not always given the chance to organise and investigate their own learning.
 - Partnerships with other schools are good. Recently, older pupils completed a science project with the local high school.
 - Good links have been established with parents and carers. They are pleased with the school and its management. Communications with parents and carers are good, events are regularly organised for them to attend, and teachers are available to discuss any concerns.
 - The local authority recognises the many strengths of Lydbury North. The federation has improved this school's capacity to continue to improve further through shared leadership and joint working. As a result, the local authority support is 'light touch', but it has provided vital support for the governing body. The local authority keeps in close contact as the federation continues to grow and flourish.
 - The governance of the school:
 - The governing body is made up of members specifically selected on the basis of their experience and skills base. They have all had recent training for their individual roles and have also restructured their committees so that their work is focused on school improvement. They are keen to hold leaders to account still further and to be fully involved in checking how well the school is doing. There are link governors who monitor the implementation of the school development plan. However, they have not drawn up a precise plan of action for school
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improvement so that the school's work can be measured accurately. They also do not have a full overview of how well the school is performing in relation to all schools nationally. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. They manage finances efficiently across the two schools, ensuring that the pupil premium money benefits the pupils for whom it is intended. They have a solid understanding of the quality of teaching and that appraisal arrangements link pay to teachers' performance.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	123547
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	406173
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided School
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Williams
Headteacher	Penelope Knight and Rosanne Pugh
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 October 2010
Telephone number	01588 680277
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